

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 212

July 17, 1998, 10:01 a.m.
Page S-8431 Temp. Record

VA-HUD APPROPRIATIONS/NASA Increase, AmeriCorps Offset

SUBJECT: Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1999 . . . S. 2168. Bond motion to table the Sessions amendment No. 3206.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 58-37

SYNOPSIS: As amended, S. 2168, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1999, will provide a net of \$93.628 billion in new budget authority, which is \$5.236 billion more than last year and \$453.1 million less than requested. Funds will not be expended on the Kyoto Protocol unless it is ratified, and the Environmental Protection Agency will be required to report on how it would implement the treaty if ratified. Discretionary funding for the Veterans Health Administration will be \$17.62 billion (\$232 million more than requested by President Clinton). Details are provided below.

- Department of Veterans Affairs, \$42.522 billion (\$23.34 billion mandatory and \$19.18 billion discretionary); \$17.620 will be provided for the Veterans Health Administration;
- Housing and Urban Development, \$25.494 billion, including: \$9.54 billion for section 8 housing; \$4.750 for Community Development Block Grants; \$310 million for Drug Elimination Grants; and \$1.550 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership Program;
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), \$13.615 billion, including full funding for the Space Station Program (\$2.3 billion; see vote No. 185 for related debate);
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), \$7.413 billion, including \$1.4 billion for Superfund;
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), \$1.362 billion, including \$846 million for disaster relief; \$11 million will be for anti-terrorism activities;
- National Science Foundation, \$3.644 billion; and

(See other side)

YEAS (58)			NAYS (37)			NOT VOTING (5)	
Republicans (16 or 31%)	Democrats (42 or 98%)		Republicans (36 or 69%)	Democrats (1 or 2%)		Republicans (3)	Democrats (2)
Allard	Akaka	Johnson	Abraham	Hutchison	Byrd	Helms ⁻²	Glenn ⁻²
Bond	Baucus	Kennedy	Ashcroft	Inhofe		McCain ⁻²	Reid ⁻²
Campbell	Biden	Kerrey	Bennett	Kempthorne		Roberts ⁻²	
Chafee	Bingaman	Kerry	Brownback	Kyl			
Coats	Boxer	Kohl	Burns	Lott			
Collins	Breaux	Landrieu	Cochran	Lugar			
D'Amato	Bryan	Lautenberg	Coverdell	Mack			
Domenici	Bumpers	Leahy	Craig	McConnell			
Grassley	Cleland	Levin	DeWine	Murkowski			
Gregg	Conrad	Lieberman	Enzi	Nickles			
Jeffords	Daschle	Mikulski	Faircloth	Roth			
Santorum	Dodd	Moseley-Braun	Frist	Sessions			
Snowe	Dorgan	Moynihan	Gorton	Shelby			
Specter	Durbin	Murray	Gramm	Smith, Bob			
Stevens	Feingold	Reed	Grams	Smith, Gordon			
Warner	Feinstein	Robb	Hagel	Thomas			
	Ford	Rockefeller	Hatch	Thompson			
	Graham	Sarbanes	Hutchinson	Thurmond			
	Harkin	Torricelli					
	Hollings	Wellstone					
	Inouye	Wyden					

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

- Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps), \$428.5 million.

● Other provisions include: individuals convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine will not be eligible for section 8 housing; it is the sense of the Senate that the goal of the Department of Veterans Affairs should be to serve all veterans at health care facilities within 250 miles of their homes; certain management reforms will be made at the Federal Housing Administration; and NASA will indemnify the developers of the X-33 and X-34, which are experimental unmanned space capsules.

The Sessions amendment would increase funding for NASA by \$33 million, to bring it up to last year's level. (The President requested a \$183 million cut; this bill will provide \$150 million more than requested). To offset that increase, the amendment would cut AmeriCorps's funding from \$220 million to \$187 million, with the intention that the reductions would come out of the money that program pays youth to volunteer.

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. After debate, Senator Bond moved to table the amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

NOTE: Subsequent to the vote, the bill, as amended, was agreed to by voice vote.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

Argument 1:

We strongly support more funding for NASA and would happily vote for this amendment except that we cannot support cutting the AmeriCorps program to provide such funding. The AmeriCorps program provides critically needed assistance to organizations like the Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and the YMCA. For many of the volunteers in this program, it also provides assistance to go to college. To date 50,000 kids who otherwise may not have hoped to ever go to college have earned educational awards. Therefore, with reluctance, we must oppose the Sessions amendment.

Argument 2:

We agree with the priorities in this amendment, but we note that it would break the balance that has been achieved. President Clinton regularly supports large cuts in NASA, and AmeriCorps is a program of his own invention that he strongly favors. We have already added back \$150 million to the NASA budget above the President's request; we do not think we can get him to accept a larger increase, especially if it will come at the expense of one of his favorite Government programs. For that reason, we will vote to table this amendment.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

NASA's budget has been cut for 5 straight years. Its personnel have been reduced by 25 percent since 1993. We, and the vast majority of the American people who consistently have said that they support the space program, want to continue space exploration. Further, we understand that NASA's efforts have led to countless scientific advances that have yielded benefits several times greater for all Americans than the amounts that have been spent. In the last few years, under Dr. Golden's leadership at NASA, incredible progress has been made in improving efficiency and effectiveness. The average spacecraft development cost has gone from \$600 million to \$175 million, and it is expected to drop to \$85 million. The average development time for a new mission has similarly dropped from 8.3 years to 4.4 years. The cost of a shuttle flight has dropped by 42 percent between 1992 and 1997. That NASA has managed to continue so many of its programs at all is a tribute to Dr. Golden's efforts, but even with all of the lowered costs many deserving missions are unfunded or underfunded. We do not think that the way to reward an agency that is very supported by the public, that has suffered more severe cutbacks than virtually any other Federal agency, and that has responded by improving its operations, is to make even more cuts. Unfortunately, the bill before us will cut NASA's budget by another \$33 million. The Hutchinson amendment would restore that money. It would not increase NASA's funding; all it will do is stop the 5-year bloodletting. As an offset, it would cut the AmeriCorps program. We realize that many Senators strongly favor that program (though we certainly have reservations with a program that pays people to "volunteer"), but we urge them to be realistic. The House has already struck funding for the AmeriCorps program, so when the House and Senate compromise on this matter in conference a cut of at least \$33 million is very likely. The Sessions amendment just faces reality a little bit ahead of time, and suggests using the savings from that cut to protect NASA. The United States has always been a nation of explorers. Now is not the time for it to abandon that legacy. We are on the verge of some of the world's greatest accomplishments in science and space. NASA can and should lead the way. We urge our colleagues to support this amendment.